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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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Perſonam, thyrſumque tenent, et ſubligar Acci. JUV.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

I AM left guardian to three young ladies, whoſe father was my intimate acquaintance at the time he made his addreſſes to their late mother: and, I very well remember he could not obtain admittance till he had firſt procured himſelf the ornament of a ſtar and ribbon, and would never have gained the lady but from the happy thought of adding another lace to his liveries. As it appeared to me that his ſucceſs was owing to theſe exteriors, I conceived no great opinion of the good ſenſe of his lady; but as ſhe made my friend a good wife, I reflected that ſhe might juſtly be influenced by the ribbon, as it marked the conſequence of her lover, and by the additional lace, as it ſeemed to beſpeak his riches. It is however ſtill a doubt with me whether

whether ſhe ever felt a ſincere paſſion for the man ſhe married; and what encreaſes this doubt, is, that I could never diſcover in either of her daughters any ſymptom of what I can properly call love. The eldeſt, who reads romances, is continually profeſſing a ſincere diſpoſition to requite (after a proper time) the pains of one who ſhall enterprize, fight, ſtarve, or catch cold for her. The ſecond would be happy with a ſcare-crow, who, with the dignity of a title, ſhould diſcover what ſhe calls a Taſte, in tricking out his perſon with embroidery, laces, jewels and trinkets. The third would never deſire to *ſee* the object of her paſſion, provided ſhe might receive reams of paper filled with flames, darts, arrows, and ſuch miſſive weapons, which do moſt execution from a diſtance. Laſt week my three wards came into my room, deſiring leave to go to the next maſquerade. I gave a haſty conſent, imagining there could be no danger for ladies whom I knew to be ſafe on the ſide of love; but ſince I have recollected my thoughts, I am apprehenſive that the eldeſt may be caught by ſome *avanturier* with ſounding language and a romantic habit; the ſecond by a Turkiſh emperor not worth ten chequins; and the youngeſt by a ſmoothed-tongued flattering poet, who when he has pulled of his borrowed habit of a ſhepherd, has perhaps no other to put on.

You will not be ſurprized, after this repreſentation, to hear me complain of the diſtreſs my promiſe has brought upon me; but as I never break my word with them, I muſt for once truſt them to their fate. But I cannot forbear entreating you, while the impreſſion is ſtrong in my mind, to write a paper on the dangerous conſequences which theſe fantaſtic diverſions may bring on young people, by giving a wild and extravagant turn

to

to their imaginations. You will perhaps wonder to hear the effects which my raſh conſent has already produced. This morning I found the eldeſt of my young ladies dreſſed out, as ſhe told me, in the character of Cyrus, in a ſuit of Perſian armour of her own contrivance. The ſecond who is of a large ſize, and has contracted a remarkable unwieldineſs by the ſtate ſhe obſerves in never moving off her couch, was at the ſame time under the hands of one of the dancers at the theatre, who was lacing her up in a habit made after that which ſhe wears herſelf in one of her ſerious dances. The youngeſt was a muſe, and expreſſed great ſatisfaction in the negligent flow of her robe, but complained that ſhe had not *ſettled her head.* I could not help ſaying I was ſorry I had contributed my part to the *unſettling it.* This was very ill received; which indeed I might have foreſeen, as well from the oppoſition which it implied to her diverſion, as becauſe the muſe, of all things in the world, deteſts a pun.

THIS, Mr. Fitz-Adam, is a very ominous beginning of an affair which I am afraid will have a worſe end. If it be attended with any of the conſequences which I apprehend, you ſhall hear farther from me; in the mean time I hope to hear from You on this ſubject, and am

SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

PRUDENTIO.

As I have received no farther intelligence from this correſpondent, and as it is now near a month ſince his letter came to hand, I am apt to think that none of thoſe dreadful conſequences have happened which he ſo greatly apprehended, and that the three ladies eſcaped without any other accident than now and then a laugh at their affectation.

I MUST confeſs I am one of thoſe who think a maſquerade an innocent amuſement, and that people have long ſince left off going to it with any deſign either good or bad: not that the vices objected to it are left off, but that they are carried on with leſs difficulty in other places, and without the ſuſpicion that would attend them there. And I may venture to ſay, if people will keep from the dangers of the gaming-table, they will run no other hazard at the maſquerade than that of making themſelves ridiculous. I will go ſtill farther, by proteſting againſt the injuſtice of charging this diverſion in particular with the miſchiefs of play, or the affected follies mentioned in my correſpondent's letter, by ſuppoſing that the men game higher, or that the women dreſs more fantaſtically in the Haymarket than elſewhere. That it is an unprofitable amuſement, and not worth the anxiety and pains that are uſually beſtowed upon it, I very readily acknowledge, but have nothing farther to ſay againſt it.

AND here I cannot help obſerving, for the information of the declaimer againſt the preſent times, that our anceſtors beſtowed more thought and trouble on their elaborate fooleries of this kind, than their poſterity have done ſince; and that they were ſometimes attended with more dangerous conſequences. Witneſs the famous *Balet des Ardens*, where Charles the ſixth of France and ſeveral young gentlemen of his court, in order to repreſent ſavages, endeavoured to imitate hair by ſticking flax upon their cloſe jackets of canvas, which were beſmeared for that purpoſe with pitch and other inflammable matter, and all, excepting the king, chained themſelves together ſo faſt, that a ſpark of fire from a flambeau falling upon one of their dreſſes, burnt two of them to death before they could be ſeparated, and ſcorched the others ſo that the greateſt part of them died in a few days.

HENRY

HENRY the eighth was the firſt who brought theſe diverſions into England; and as they were very amuſing from their novelty, they were frequently exhibited in that reign with great ſucceſs. It is perhaps to a building erected by that monarch for an occaſional maſquerade, that the firſt idea of Ranelagh owes it's birth. It will not, I believe, be denied that the modern Ranelagh is rather an improvement upon the old one; a deſcription of which, together with the diſaſter that befel it, is thus particularly ſet forth by the hiſtorian of thoſe times.

"THE king cauſed to be builded a banqueting-houſe, "eight hundred feet in compaſs, like a theatre after a "goodly device, builded in ſuch manner as (I think) "was never ſeen. And in the midſt of the ſame ban-"queting-houſe was ſet up a great pillar of timber, made "of eight great maſts, bound together with iron bands "for to hold them together: for it was a hundred and "thirty four feet in length, and coſt ſix pounds thirteen "ſhillings and fourpence to ſet it upright. The ban-"queting-houſe was covered over with canvas faſtened "with ropes and iron as faſt as might be deviſed; and "within the ſaid houſe was painted the heavens with "ſtars, ſun, moon and clouds, with divers other "things made above over men's heads. And about the "high pillar of timber that ſtood upright in the midſt, "was made ſtages of timber for organs and other inſtru-"ments to ſtand upon, and men to play on them. "But in the morning of the ſame day wherein the build-"ing was accompliſhed, the wind began to riſe, and at "night blew off the canvas and all the elements, with "the ſtars, ſun, moon and clouds, and all the king's "ſeats that were made with great riches, beſides all "other things were all daſhed and loſt."

THUS